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HEARN
AND HIS BIOGRAPHERS

THE RECORD OF A LITERARY CONTROVERSY

BY OSCAR LEWIS, 1893-

TOGETHER WITH

A GROUP OF LETTERS FROM

LAFCADIO HEARN TO JOSEPH TUNISON

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED

1930

THE WESTGATE PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO

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PREFACE

THIS little book is intended to appeal to a specialized and not very numerous audience. Its subject matter precludes the likelihood of wide general circulation, both because Lafcadio Hearn is not, and never has been, a "popular" author, and because much of the material bears on matters that are important chiefly to those who are already familiar with Hearn's remarkable career. It is to the student of American literature and, in particular, to the Hearn enthusiast, that these pages are addressed. To these, the publication of a new group of letters by a man whose correspondence James Huneker pronounced the most fascinating and self-revealing since that of Stevenson, requires no excuse.

When he died, Hearn was called "the most loved and the most hated figure in recent literary history." Certainly no man's memory was more savagely attacked, or defended more passionately, than was his during the

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four years that followed his death. From newly discovered material, including the letters of all the chief actors in the drama, it is now possible to reconstruct the story of "the bitterest controversy in American literary history," and to admirers of Hearn this too can be presented without excuse or elaborate explanation.

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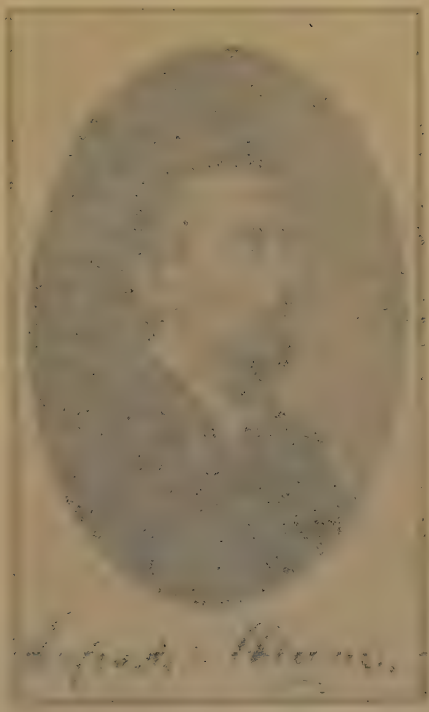


From a photograph taken at Cincinnati in the late '70s.

LETTERS OF LAFCADIO HEARN

TO JOSEPH TUNISON

LETTERS OF LAFCADIO HEARN TO JOSEPH TUNISON

In all, some six hundred and fifty of Lafcadio Hearn's letters have been published. Of these, about three hundred and fifty appeared in Elizabeth Bisland's *The Life & Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*, about fifty each in George M. Gould's *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn*, and in *Letters from the Raven*, edited by Milton Bronner; the remainder are included in later books on Hearn.

Of the three American friends of longest standing to whom Hearn wrote at all, the letters to two—H. E. Krehbiel and Henry Watkin—have long since been published. With a single exception, his letters to the third, Joseph Tunison, have

never heretofore found their way into print. Yet the one Tunison letter that was published—Hearn's famous onslaught on New York's "cubic miles of cut granite and iron," which appeared in the *Life and Letters*—was of so fine a quality as to cause natural regret that there were no more. The letters that follow, particularly those written during the early days of Hearn's stay in Japan, will in part supply that lack.

The friendship of Hearn and Tunison dated from the middle '70s when they were employed as reporters on Cincinnati newspapers. It was interrupted when both presently left the city, Hearn going to New Orleans in 1879, where he eventually became a special writer for the *Times-Democrat*, and Tunison in 1884 joining their friend Krehbiel on the staff of the New York *Tribune*. Their friendship was renewed in 1888 when Hearn was in New York for some weeks previous to his first departure for the West Indies. During the early months of 1890, the two roomed together at 149 West 10th Street. It was there that Hearn, working

under pressure, translated *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard* in two weeks (for which he received $100); there plans for the Japan expedition were matured and completed; and it was from there, finally, that he set off on what proved to be his permanent exile from America.

[LETTER ONE]

Dear Joe:—

Have landed in this frightful, noisy, furious city again to my sorrow, and would like to see you if you are able to call around to this beastly hotel tonight. Nothing in especial but the pleasure of chatting with a good friend.

Lafcadio Hearn

This letter and the two that follow were written in the early part of May, 1889. Hearn had just returned from his second, and last, visit to the West Indies. After a few days in New York he proceeded on to Philadelphia, where he spent the summer as a guest of Dr. George M. Gould, working on *Two Years in the French West Indies*, which was published the following spring. For many months he had been steeped in the langour and quiet of Martinique, and the impact of noisy, hustling New York confused and repelled him.

This first short note, which was undated, was written on the stationery of the United States Hotel, Fulton, Pearl and Water Streets, New York City.

[LETTER TWO]

Dear Joe:—

The note did not get to me till two o'clock today,—No. 39 having been mistaken for No. 38 by the intelligent hotel-clerk. I go out of town tonight until Monday when I shall be here again for a day or two. For the moment I don't know where I am going to stay, but will soon decide. It is a pleasure to know you are well, and that I will be able to see you soon, and have a big chat.

Your chum,
L. Hearn

Evidently Tunison was unable to call at Hearn's hotel as the latter had requested, and had sent a note of explanation, perhaps making an appointment for the following day. Hearn's reply (above), was dated May 9, 1889. The second sentence is probably a reference to a visit he made at that time to H. M. Alden, who lived at Metuchen, New Jersey.

[LETTER THREE]

Dear Joe:—

By the time this reaches you I shall have disappeared.

The moment I get into all this beastly machinery called New York, I get caught in some belt and whirled around madly in all directions until I have no sense left. This city drives me crazy, or, if you prefer, crazier; and I have no peace of mind or rest of body till I get out of it. Nobody can find anybody, nothing seems to be anywhere, everything seems to be mathematics and geometry and enigmatics and riddles and confusion worse confounded: architecture and mechanics run mad. One has to live by intuition and move by steam. I think an earthquake might produce some improvement. The so-called improvements in civilization have apparently resulted in making it impossible to see, hear, or find anything out. You are improving yourselves out of the natural world . . . I want to get back among the monkeys and the parrots . . . under a violet sky among green peaks

Facsimile of Letter Three.

Dear Joe:—

appeared.

On European Plan.
Pearl and Water Streets.
—
ING & FOLLMER, PROPRIETORS.

New York, ... 188

Dear Joe:—

By the time this reaches you I shall have disappeared. The moment I get into all this beastly machinery called New York, I get caught in some belt and whirled around madly in all directions until I have no sense left. This city drives me crazy, or, if you prefer, crazier; and I have no peace of mind or rest of body till I get out of it. Nobody can find anything, nothing seems to be anywhere, everything seems to be matter and geometry and enigmas and riddles and confusion worse confounded: architects and mechanics run mad. One has to live by intuition and move by steam. I think

some improvement. The so-called improvements of civilization have apparently resulted in making it impossible to see, hear, or find anything out. You are imprisoned yourselves out of the natural world.... I want to get back among the monkeys and the parrots, — under a violet sky among green peaks and an eternally-lilac and lukewarm sea, — where clothing is superfluous and reading too much of an exertion, — where every sleeps 14 hours out of the 24.... This is frightful, nightmarish, devilish! Civilization is a hideous thing. Blessed is savagery!... Even a palm 200 feet high is a finer thing in the natural order than seventy-times-a-New Yorks. — I came in by one door as you went out at the other. Now there are cubic miles of cut granite and iron

once find a hackman or cabby, and send away. I am

and an eternally lilac and lukewarm sea,—where clothing is superfluous and reading too much of an exertion,—where everybody sleeps 14 hours out of the 24... This is frightful, nightmarish, devilish! Civilization is a hideous thing. Blessed is savagery!... Surely a palm 200 feet high is a finer thing in the natural order than seventy times seven New Yorks.

I came in by one door as you went out at the other. Now there are cubic miles of cut granite and iron fury between us. I shall at once find a hackman to take me away. I am sorry not to see you—but since you live in hell, what can I do? I will try to find you again this summer.

Best affection,

L. H.

The plans of the two friends to get together failed to work out, and this letter, written just before Hearn's departure for Philadelphia, expresses his accumulated dislike for the complexity and tumult of New York. This letter originally appeared in Bisland's *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn,* and has since been several times republished.

[LETTER FOUR]

Dear friend Joe:

Until further notice my address will be Frazer & Co., Yokohama, Japan.

A splendid trip—warm at each end,—cold in the middle—25° below 0 at Winnipeg; 30° below at Port Arthur. Here it is spring—clear, cool, warm in the sun only. We start tomorrow morning.

The sight of the Rockies was worth the trip.

In haste,

With best regards,

Lafcadio Hearn

Hearn left New York for Japan on March 8, 1890, going first to Montreal, then west over the Canadian Pacific—with which some publicity arrangement had been made—and sailing on one of that company's steamers from Vancouver on March 18. This letter was written on the stationery of the Hotel Vancouver, and is dated March 17, 1890.

[LETTER FIVE]

Dear Joe:—

Two delightful letters from you reached me only today (June 10th)—I had been unable to call at Frazer & Co. for them. Hereafter better address c/o British Consul, Yokohama, until such time as I can get settled somewhere.

It was a bad business for me, this trip to Japan. First, the artist, who is an ignorant brute and unbearably disagreeable, went back on his word to make the first payment from the C. P. R. R. over to me. Secondly, I found rates of living higher in Yokohama than New York. Thirdly, the conditions of the Harpers rendered living by literary work wholly out of the possible. Fourthly, I could not get out of Japan. Fifthly, I could not get employment.

So I have been having a much worse time than in the West Indies. I have broken altogether with the Harpers: to continue would have been an encouragement of the policy of starvation. I am going to settle in an out-of-

the-way part of Japan as a school teacher. The position will be open to me in September. Meanwhile I am teaching a little—just enough to keep me from sinking. To do literary work in Japan requires much time. I suppose I must stay at least five years to write a book. The language is extraordinarily difficult. The climate is very cool in winter and very hot in summer. The country is, however, full of the strangest charm. Artistically it is one vast museum. Socially and naturally it is really Fairyland. The first impression produced by the Japanese themselves is that of being among the kindest kind of fairies...The religions seized my emotions at once, and absorbed them. I am steeped in Buddhism, a Buddhism totally unlike that of books—something infinitely tender, touching, naif, beautiful. I mingle with crowds of pilgrims to the great shrines; I ring the great bells; and burn incense-rods before the great smiling gods. My study is confined to the popular religion, so far, and its relation to popular character and art. There are phases of this art surprisingly Greek, and legends amazing in their similarity to Hellenic myths,—especially the myths of Hades. From the Greek kingdoms of India

some Greek art is thought to have been filtered through China and Corea into antique Japan.

The women are, at first sight, disappointing: at second sight, delightful;—on further acquaintance unapproachable in grace of manner, dainty simplicity, exquisiteness of character. They have something about them totally indescribable—something not physical so much as sympathetic and emotional,—which belongs only to Japan, and resembles nothing one sees in any other country.

But I do not know whether I shall always like this country. It will be better to be a Japanese school teacher than to work for the Harpers at $500 a year. Still, it seems to me for the first time that my life is really a failure. Perhaps everything will turn out for the best. If I could have some small journalistic position in the South again, however, I think I should take it. I have had terribly long fits of nostalgia for the tropics.

Well, I will write you better things as soon as I get settled. I am so upset now that I am a poor correspondent. I am afraid I must resign myself to melt into this Orient and be buried in it—out of the hearing of Euro-

pean tongues or the sight of European faces, in a little village where no stranger ever goes.

With best regards,

Lafcadio Hearn

One is not allowed to live among the Japanese except as their employe, or to enter the country without a passport.

I wish you had accepted that C. Gazette's offer, if only temporarily. But perhaps you know best.

Hearn was accompanied on his trip to Japan by Charles D. Weldon, a staff artist for Harpers; they were to work together on a series of travel articles for *Harper's Monthly*. When Hearn learned that Weldon was to be paid more for making the illustrations than he would receive for the articles themselves, he immediately broke off his connection with Harpers, even refusing to accept royalties due him on previous books. These were eventually paid, however, through a third person.

This letter, written less than two months after he had arrived at Yokohama, reflects two opposing influences that persisted, though in varying degree, during his entire stay in Japan: his delight with the country, and his concern over the problem of how to support himself there.

[LETTER SIX]

Kumamoto, Kyushu, Japan

Dear Joe:—

I have never been for any length of time without a thought of you since I came here; but it has been until now an enigma whether I could make this an anchoring place or not:—indeed, the enigma is not quite solved. However, I think I can see my way, and some other things as well. It was like beginning life over again; but I am tolerably solid here now, and I think I shall stay, for at least ten years more. If I leave Japan at all, it is not likely to be permanently.

Would you like to come to Japan? I wish to put this question a long way ahead of my hope. If you have married, or have taken the editorship of some paper, and have fine prospects before you,—put my question by. If you are quite free, and would like a happy, contemplative, extremely peaceful existence—with ample leisure for study —a life without pressure of any sort, why, think about it a little. Should you weary of the Orient, you might

return very easily,—and your experience in it would always be one worth having had. You could not regret it. Should cost be an obstacle in the way of your coming, I might be able to advance what you want. While in Japan, should you need money or anything else, I would be able to fix everything. So also, for the question of your return, if you get tired. I think, if you wish to take a teacher's position here, you would make your way very successfully. There is a strong reaction in Japan against the missionaries, who have been allowed to attempt some foreign teaching, and abused their opportunities in order to proselytize or disseminate prejudice. There is a desire for lay-scholars. Unfortunately all contracts made are for short terms,—one or two years. But a good man is sure of a place,—especially a man who does not frequent missionaries. Beginning with $100 or $150 a month for about 24 hours service in a week, one may reach more lucrative positions in a short time after becoming trusted and known. The salary may seem small; but considering the local scale of living, it is very good. One cannot spend in the country more than half of it;—in Tokyo, of course, things are more like they are in

America. In the higher government schools, salaries run from 200 to 250 yen per month. A knowledge of Latin and Greek is a desideratum—especially Latin; Greek is very little studied anywhere. Latin is studied because of its value in the legal profession, in medicine, and in the higher forms of prosody. I might *be able to get a good place for you.*

I can't say that the prospect is a satisfactory one. I do not know how you would like it. I should not return to American or English life for double my present salary of $200,—although I might feel tempted to exchange this climate (about as severe in the main island as in Southern England) for a tropical one. But I cannot tell how you would feel. In time I am not sure whether you would not feel lonely. For a year or so, I imagine you would find every day something novel and pleasant. As for teaching, Japanese students are like imaginary beings for docility, earnestness, courtesy, etc. They are students of the dreamland of teachers. You would never have your patience tried, should you try the experiment. It requires some little time to know them; but a friend can post you on everything regarding school-discipline

in a week or less. You could pass a few months with me before teaching anywhere.

In any of the large cities you can get Bass' Ale, whiskey, beef, eggs and bread. Fine western cooking only in the open ports. I do not think you could live on purely Japanese fare for more than six months. I did it for nearly a year, but had to return to the flesh-pots after a severe sickness. The Japanese food is, however, a very pleasant alternative in the summer-time, and once a day, between two heavier meals. You would be expected to live an upright life: that would have been much less of an obstacle for you than for me in old times,—I suppose it would be no obstacle to you now. The uprightness does not involve anything irrational.

Did you never get my letter from Matsue? I wrote you twice since I came to Japan—not much to boast of: but you did not write to me at all. There are fine men out here, from all parts of Europe, in Government employ. You would like to know some of them. I can get you anything you wish for here in the way of books about Japanese,—or curios. I would like to hear from you.

Ever most truly,

Lafcadio Hearn

P. S. *July 13th, '92.*

Dear Joe:—

The foregoing letter has been several months in my desk, waiting over till I could decide what the Japanese radicals were going to do about educational matters. There was a movement to abolish two higher Government schools, costing about $56,000 a year,— for economy; but the storm is over, and the Government has squelched all opposition to its educational policy. So the letter goes. I go to Kyoto now, with a letter to the Government educational representative there about you. I shall be able to find out all about chances.

If you should get a place in Kyoto, which might *be offered you, you would have only about 20 hours a week to teach, and a good salary. You would be obliged to save money; for there is no way of spending it. The position is one I should like very much better than the one I have; for Kyoto is the most curious and interesting city in Japan. I am under contract, however, to remain in Kyushu.*

L. H.

During the two years since his previous letter, Hearn's fortunes had changed for the better. Through Basil Hall Chamberlain, the author of *Things Japanese* and then Professor of English Literature at the University of Tokyo, he had received, in September, 1890, an appointment as instructor of English at Matsue, in the province of Izumo. The district then was still remote from Western influence and there Hearn spent one of the happiest years of his life. In January, 1891, he married Setsu Koizumi, a girl of twenty-two, and a member of an ancient Samurai family.

The winters at Matsue, however, proved too severe and Hearn succeeded, again with Chamberlain's help, in being transferred further south, becoming a professor at the Imperial University at Kumamoto, one of the largest in Japan. After the primitive beauty of Izumo, Hearn found his new, half-Europeanized surroundings disappointing; however, as this letter shows, his duties were light and he still found much to please him. Of course, he had been writing steadily since his arrival and, beginning in September, 1891, chapters of his first book on Japan had begun to appear in the *Atlantic Monthly.*

THE RECORD OF A LITERARY CONTROVERSY

I

THE CHIEF CHARACTERS IN THE CONTROVERSY

BISLAND, ELIZABETH *Author and journalist. Began newspaper work on New Orleans* Times-Democrat, *later becoming an editor of* Cosmopolitan Magazine. *Author of Hearn's official biography and of several books on travel, etc. Married (1891) Charles W. Wetmore. Died at Washington, D. C., January, 1929.*

TUNISON, JOSEPH SALATHIEL *Born at Bucyrus, Ohio, 1849. Reporter on Cincinnatti newspapers from 1874 to 1883, on New York* Tribune *from 1884 to 1896, and on various Ohio newspapers from 1901 onward. Author of* The Master Virgil, The Sapphic Stanza, Dramatic Traditions of the Dark Ages, *etc.*

KREHBIEL, HENRY EDWARD *Music critic. Born at Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1854. On Cincinnati newspapers from 1874 to 1880, thereafter for many years music editor of the New York* Tribune. *Author of many books relating to music. Died March 20, 1923.*

GOULD, GEORGE MILBRY *Born in Maine, 1848. Studied for ministry, later changing to medicine and beginning practise in 1888. Author of* Gould's Medical Dictionary, *books on medical subjects, etc., and of* Concerning Lafcadio Hearn (1908). *Died at Atlantic City, August, 1922.*

YOKOHAMA, SEPT. 28 *Lafcadio Hearn, the well-known author, died at Tokyo, September 26th, of heart trouble. His funeral will take place Sept. 30th.*

To most American newspaper readers, this obscure item in their morning papers in the fall of 1904 meant nothing at all. Some few identified the curious name with certain quiet books on Japan that had appeared at intervals during the fourteen years preceding, and others recalled vaguely that Hearn was a white man who had married a Japanese woman and adopted the Japanese mode of life. In the literary centers, the news was of more importance, for there Hearn's reputation as an interpreter of quiet phases of pre-industrial Japan was "established," which meant that his books, though they were

very little read, were almost universally praised. During the next few weeks a familiar routine was followed; newspapers and literary journals published articles in which the dead man's accomplishments were reviewed, his place assigned, and his reputation launched gracefully on the road to obscurity.

The unexpected news of his death created real interest only in places where Hearn was personally known, and this was chiefly because during his comparatively short life he had made more enemies than any other literary man of his day. To the queer-looking, shy, morbidly sensitive little wanderer a bitter enmity had always been more dear than an intimate friendship. He had collected enemies with the same zest and enthusiasm that other men devote to making friends, and when he died the list of those with whom he had quarreled was a long and distinguished one, in which he took genuine pride.

It is a tribute to the quality of his enmities that they lasted beyond the grave. His death ended

none of the bitter personal feuds in which he had constantly been embroiled; in most instances it had the effect of stirring them to renewed life. While he lived, there had been little public airing of grievances on the part of his enemies. In such encounters Hearn had early earned the reputation of giving back far better than he received. On the rare occasions when victims, unaware of his talent for invective, had brought their quarrels into the open, Hearn had accepted the challenge with such evident pleasure, and had replied with so prompt a torrent of ridicule and abuse, that all were impressed with the virtue of caution. There had been few such attacks. During the last decade of his life his enemies had preserved a prudent, if unwilling, silence. Unmolested, Hearn had followed the quiet routine of his life in Japan: lecturing to his Japanese students, writing his books, worrying about the education of his sons, and fighting his losing battle with ill health.

Then came the brief cablegram from Yokohama. Lafcadio Hearn, at fifty-four, was unexpected-

ly dead. To his friends—for the little man had inspired love as well as hatred, loyalty as well as resentment—the news meant the loss of an original and striking personality, of an actively stimulating influence. To his enemies, it meant that bottled-up resentments could be safely released. For understandable reasons, little that was derogatory had been written about Hearn while he lived. A great deal was written during the four years after his death.

II

THE *revelations of cupidity, jealousy, and coarseness that I have had during the preparation of this work, and from those whom he loved and trusted, are too amazing.*

HE quotation is from a letter written in June, 1905, by Elizabeth Bisland, Hearn's official biographer. Much had happened during the nine months since he had been buried in the quiet Buddhist cemetery at the edge of Tokyo. In America, three separate biographies of Hearn were under way, each author eager to be the first in the field. The three competitors were: Milton Bronner, the editor of a newspaper in Covington, Kentucky, across the river from Cincinnati; Dr. George M. Gould, a physician with literary aspirations, who lived at Philadelphia, and Mrs. C. W. Wetmore who, under her maiden name

of Elizabeth Bisland, was then well known as a journalist and as a writer for magazines.

By the spring of 1905, the preliminary struggle was over. The victory had gone to Miss Bisland, who had received both from Hearn's literary executor, Mitchell McDonald, and from his publishers the assignment to write his official biography. The prize had not been won without strong opposition, for neither Bronner nor Gould yielded voluntarily. Neither would abandon his project, and both eventually published books, though these were necessarily much changed from their original plan. Shut off from access to necessary material, with the family letters and papers in the hands of their successful rival, both were forced to abandon their plan of doing a life. Bronner's work, the first of these two in the field, was chiefly made up of a group of letters written by Hearn to a Cincinnati printer. To these were added sixteen curious epistles to an unidentified Cincinnati woman, and several newspaper articles reprinted from the Cincinnati *Commercial*. The book was published

by Brentano's in 1907, under the title: *Letters from the Raven*. Gould's book, put forth ostensibly as an estimate of Hearn's literary character (though it was written with another purpose in mind) was published in Philadelphia by the George W. Jacobs Company in May, 1908. Miss Bisland's biography, *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*, preceded the other two. It was brought out in two bulky volumes by Houghton, Mifflin & Company in December, 1906.

Of the three, Bronner's book requires the least attention. Considering its relative insignificance, one finds it hard today to account for the tumult the announcement of its publication created. As a matter of fact, it was not its actual contents but their fears of what it might contain that so aroused Hearn's friends.

From letters written at the time both by Miss Bisland and by Joseph Tunison, it is possible to trace the history of the Bronner book. Very soon after Hearn's death, both the Covington editor and the Philadelphia physician began to collect

material for their projected biographies, and both wrote Hearn's American friends asking for contributions of letters and reminiscences. In Cincinnati, Bronner persuaded Henry Watkin, who was then past eighty and an inmate of the Old Men's Home, to allow him the use of the considerable group of letters written to Watkin by Hearn. Bronner decided to put these to a two-fold use: first to secure their publication in a magazine, and second, to use his possession of them as a lever by which he could secure the co-operation of Hearn's publishers and of his literary executor. With this in mind, he sent the Watkin letters to Houghton, Mifflin & Company, with the suggestion that he be appointed to write a life of Hearn, at the same time submitting copies to *The Atlantic Monthly* for serial publication. The *Atlantic* decided against the publication of the letters, both because they already had considerable Hearn material on hand and because, since the magazine was not illustrated, it would be necessary to omit the sketches with which Hearn had embellished his letters to the printer. Meantime,

Houghton, Mifflin & Company had remained noncommittal with reference to Bronner's plan for a life, for the reason that other candidates had presented themselves and the publishers had decided to leave the final choice to Mrs. Hearn. Several months passed before a reply could be received from Japan, and Bronner seems to have attempted to force the issue by threatening, in the event that someone else were appointed, to tell in print the story of Hearn's marriage to the Cincinnati negress, Alethea Foley. Word eventually came from the widow naming Elizabeth Bisland as her choice, and Bronner was so informed. The Covington editor responded by charging that Houghton, Mifflin & Company had "stolen his idea" for a biography and by stating that he would publish his own book notwithstanding. *Letters from the Raven* was duly announced a few weeks later, in an edition of 1000 copies to be published by the Mintie Press of Covington. On March 11, 1905, the following notice of it appeared in *The New York Times:*

"A volume of letters and poems by the late Lafcadio Hearn is shortly to appear from the Mintie Press of Covington, Ky., with the title *Letters from the Raven*. The book contains a cycle of letters in which Hearn tells much of his life in the South, impressions of Memphis, pictures of New Orleans, verses, grave and gay, and translations from Creole and negro love songs..."

Bronner's project received little support from Hearn's friends and acquaintances. Two of these, Krehbiel and Tunison, both of whom had known Hearn since his Cincinnati days and had been his intimates years later in New York, had been approached by Bronner for material and both had refused it, though there is evidence that Krehbiel at first was inclined to co-operate. Neither Krehbiel nor Tunison was able to view Hearn's memory through the rose-colored glasses of his later friends. Both at one time or another had suffered from Hearn's unpredictable moods and behavior, his habit of suspecting the motives of his friends, his sudden, unexplained breaking off of relations.

With one of them, Krehbiel, he had quarreled bitterly and, though there is no evidence of an open break, his correspondence with Tunison came to a sudden end more than ten years before Hearn's death. However, although both were inclined to judge Hearn—and each other—severely, neither was willing to lend support to Bronner's venture.

It was with reference to all this that Tunison, who had returned to Ohio in 1901 and was then employed on the Dayton *Journal*, wrote in March, 1905, concerning the announcement of the Bronner book. The letter was to Alexander Hill, of Cincinnati, who was then assembling material pertaining to Hearn's life and work.

"My dear Hill:

I cannot tell with certainty how big a fool Krehbiel is; but he wrote me, in the letter asking me for the information which I in turn asked of you, that he had not given out any letters but had written some biographical data. I advised him to use his letters to better purpose. You know as well as I do what this rotten book means. If Min-

"tie were anything better than a blackguard he would have consulted Hearn's widow about his publication. I think you will find that old Pop what's-his-name, Hearn's printer friend, has furnished the letters. He probably helped set up the blooming stuff. Of all the old fools on earth an old printer is the worst. My impression is that a mistake of time has been made in this case, without any reference to the honesty of the business. It is evident that the *Atlantic* has a store of small things. Hearn's reputation in the mythical Asiatic atmosphere is bound to become something astonishing, something like he himself imagined when he was trying to develop a faith in Buddhism. If the Covington gang had waited until the *Atlantic* had run out of Hearn stuff and until the Japanese had had a chance to make a Shinto god out of Hearn, they would have been able to sell, at any price they chose, not one thousand but fifty thousand copies of their damned thief's job. They make me think of old man Worthington in New York, and he was the lim-

"it when it came to a book swindle. Then, of course, we may find that the *Atlantic* knew of this publication and that its piece in this (April) number is from Bronner's collection. That will put a different face on the pecuniary part of the affair, but it will make Houghton, Mifflin & Co. partners in a crime. I should not dare to say anything while the book is for sale, but when it gets into hands where an advertisement will not benefit the gang, I shall be glad to give it the benefit of a free notice. . ."

Tunison's reference to the Bronner book as "a damned thief's job" requires a bit of explanation. Hearn's books, notwithstanding the critical praise they had received, had never reached a wide public, and the income from them had never been sufficient to maintain his far from elaborate establishment in Japan. Except for the year or two when he was contributing regularly to *Harper's Monthly*, there had been no period in his life when he had not been obliged to supplement his income by newspaper work, by doing translations or, after he

reached Japan, by teaching. During his last years, particularly after he had passed his fiftieth birthday, this matter of finances was a constant source of anxiety. His last letters from Japan are filled with references to his worry over his future and that of his family. In his anxiety to better his financial condition he had even resigned himself to the distasteful prospect of a return to Western civilization, and had urged Miss Bisland to try to secure him lecture engagements or a place on the faculty of some American university.

Hearn died while these negotiations were in progress, leaving his American friends much concerned for the future of his dependents. These, and Hearn's publishers as well, recognized that his biography and his letters constituted valuable literary property, and there was a natural desire that the revenue from them should go to his family. When Miss Bisland became his official biographer, she wrote an acquaintance:

"I don't know whether Mr. Greenslet (of Houghton, Mifflin & Company) told you that the work

th Side, near Elm. CINCINNATI, O.

(Fac simile of Business Card when I retired from the Printing Business.

LAFCADIO HEARN'S LETTERS TO "DEAR OLD DAD." . . .

nature, and be to him a sympathetic and confidential companion.

For so young a man the correct knowledge and marked ability in

and an almost filial attachment soon made us akin.

published.

money in bringing the matter to an issue.

Leaflet prepared by Henry Watkin announcing the publication of Hearn's letters to him.

two hundred pages. Price one dollar and twenty-five cents net.

1.25. Orders may be sent to MR. MILTON BRONNER, Box 92, Cov-

Respectfully,

HENRY WATKIN.

These letters will introduce you to LAFCADIO HEARN, who

of some American university.

she wrote an acquaintance.

853 Uninterruptedly 49 Years. 1902

OFFICE OF H. WATKIN,

Steam Book and Job Printer,

No. 127 LONGWORTH ST.

outh Side, near Elm, CINCINNATI, O.

(Fac simile of Business Card when I retired from the Printing Business.

LAFCADIO HEARN'S LETTERS TO "DEAR OLD DAD." . . .

It is difficult for me to explain why I gave up Mr. Hearn's letters for publication. During the whole time of his residence in Cincinnati we were very close friends. He had not been in the city a week before I realized that he needed the confidence of some one to whom he could be himself and who would appreciate the peculiarities of his sensitive nature, and be to him a sympathetic and confidential companion.

For so young a man the correct knowledge and marked ability in the free use of pure language in speaking of things that he had seen and describing events of his own experience, at once attracted me to him, and an almost filial attachment soon made us akin.

On the death of Mr. Hearn I had many applications for the privilege of publishing the letters I had received from him during a correspondence of ten or fifteen years. Mr. Bronner of the "Kentucky Post," called on me, and I gave him the letters to look over. He suggested as the best thing I could do with them was to have them published.

I need hardly say that I was not surprised at the suggestion, but how get them printed? He at once said he would see what he could do with them. He has spent a good deal of time and considerable money in bringing the matter to an issue.

The letters are now published, with a brief notice of the life of Mr. Hearn. It makes a very interesting and attractive book of about two hundred pages. Price one dollar and twenty-five cents net.

The book will be delivered free on receipt of the published price, $1.25. Orders may be sent to MR. MILTON BRONNER, Box 92, Covington, Ky.; or to FRANK H. VEHR, Printer, 127 Opera Place, Cincinnati.

Respectfully,

HENRY WATKIN.

P. S.—These letters will introduce you to LAFCADIO HEARN, who you will be pleased to know was a close friend of mine to the end of his life. H. W.

HENRY WATKIN,
1312 McMillan Street,
CINCINNATI, O.

"of preparing the Hearn *Life and Letters* was transferred to me—at Mrs. Hearn's request—as being his personal friend. Mr. Greenslet was very nice about it, more particularly as I was able to do the work as a labor of love, and let the Hearn children have all the income from the book."

This attitude automatically secured her the fullest co-operation of all but two or three of Hearn's friends in America and Japan. Milton Bronner's plan to be first in the field with a rival book, the proceeds from which were to go to himself and his publisher, naturally aroused the opposition of Hearn's friends. His requests to them for biographical data, and for permission to use their letters from Hearn, met with flat refusals from all sources except one.

The single exception was eighty-year-old Henry Watkin. Watkin's friendship with Hearn dated from 1869, when the latter, a homeless and bedraggled youth lately arrived from England, had been grateful for the opportunity to sleep on a pile of papers in the rear of Watkin's printing shop.

Later, when his local success on Cincinnati newspapers had brought him other friends, he had seen less of the printer. However, after his relations with the negress had brought on the scandal that forced him to leave Cincinnati, the effect was a renewal of his friendship with Watkin, who had evidently been his only confidant in the Foley affair. On his journey south, and during his first weeks in New Orleans, he wrote Watkin with great regularity, making occasional reference to his pain at parting from the girl, and once or twice enclosing messages to be relayed to her. As had happened earlier in Cincinnati, new friendships and new interests in New Orleans presently caused the correspondence to languish. Hearn, however, preserved to the end a feeling of friendship for the old printer. In his unaccountable way, after years of silence, he abruptly reopened the correspondence from Japan and, after a few months, just as abruptly closed it again.

Watkin had carefully kept every scrap that Hearn had written him, even to scrawled messages

the latter had left in the shop during his absences, or had pinned to the door. In addition, he had preserved another group of Hearn letters, the record of a far from robust flirtation with the wife of a Cincinnati physician. When Hearn's timidity and unresponsiveness had brought the affair to an early end, the lady, at his request, had returned his letters, and Hearn, who evidently thought well of their literary quality, had left them with Watkin for safekeeping.

Bronner's search for Hearn material in Cincinnati had, as has been noted, brought him into touch with Watkin, and the latter had been persuaded to allow the Covington editor exclusive use of his letters and of the "Letters to a Lady." The failure of other of Hearn's friends to co-operate forced Bronner to abandon his plan of writing a biography. He stated in his preface that his hope of gathering material for a life having been "frustrated," he was publishing such material as he had "in the hope that it will lead to a better understanding and appreciation of the famous writer."

When the book was announced, Watkin himself printed and distributed a leaflet which read in part as follows:

"On the death of Mr. Hearn I had many applications for the privilege of publishing the letters I had received from him during a correspondence of ten or fifteen years. Mr. Bronner of the *Kentucky Post*, called on me, and I gave him the letters to look over. He suggested that the best thing I could do with them was to have them published.

I need hardly say that I was surprised at the suggestion, but how get them published? He at once said that he would see what he could do with them. He had spent a good deal of time and considerable money in bringing the matter to an issue.

The letters are now published, with a brief notice of the life of Mr. Hearn. It makes a very interesting and attractive book of about 200 pages. Price one dollar and twenty-five cents net. . . . Orders may be sent to Mr. Milton Bronner, Box

"92, Covington, Ky.; or to Frank H. Vehr, 127 Opera Place, Cincinnati.

Respectfully,

Henry Watkin"

For some reason, there was a last minute change of publishers. The Mintie Press faded out of the picture and *Letters from the Raven* appeared under the Brentano imprint in October, 1907.

III

WHEN *I was a young man in my twenties. . . . I resolved to take the part of some people who were much disliked in the place where I lived. I thought that those who disliked them were morally wrong—so I argued boldly for them and went over to their side. Then all the rest of the people stopped speaking to me, and I hated them for it. But I was too young then to understand.* —Hearn in 1894

THE Bronner-Watkin book aroused the opposition of Hearn's friends because it was felt that it would hurt the sale of his official biography and divert badly needed royalties from the widow in Japan. There was, however, another reason for opposition; one that had nothing to do with royalties.

Since Hearn's death, there had been constant danger that the old scandal involving the Cincinnati negress would find its way into print. Alethea Foley, then a woman of fifty, was still living in Cin-

cinnati, and there were dozens of persons in the city who were familiar with the circumstances that had almost caused a public scandal twenty-five years before. Bronner, of course, knew the story, and there is ample evidence in letters of Hearn's friends that they feared he might use his knowledge to secure co-operation in the preparation of his projected life, or, after his book was published, to stimulate its sale. This fear was probably unfounded; still it was a genuine one and thoroughly in keeping with the curious attitude of mutual distrust and suspicion that marked the entire group.

Both Tunison and Krehbiel, who had been in Cincinnati at the time and who knew how widespread was the knowledge of the affair, realized the impossibility of keeping the secret indefinitely. As newspapermen, they recognized that sooner or later the sensational possibilities of the story would tempt some editor to print it. Knowing this, both — and Krehbiel in particular — urged Miss Bisland to recognize the situation and to deal with it frankly in her biography, pointing out that

in this way the importance of the episode would be minimized and its sensational aspects destroyed.

Hearn's official biographer, however, could not quite bring herself to adopt this very shrewd suggestion. The Foley episode was so at variance with her whole conception of Hearn that she found herself unwilling to admit it to her book—and not only that but any other incident that would bring Hearn's behavior into conflict with the conventions of the time. With some amazement, Tunison and Krehbiel presently discovered that it was the biographer's intention to present her subject in a uniformly heroic role, and to suppress rigidly anything that might detract from the picture. Naturally, this was not Tunison's or Krehbiel's idea of how a biography of Hearn should be written, and Krehbiel, who was in close touch with Mrs. Wetmore during this period, tried hard to persuade her to adopt a more realistic viewpoint. He failed completely. Whatever evidence Krehbiel had to present that Hearn had his share of human weaknesses was met with the objection that his actions

were open to two interpretations. When he cited specific instances that could hardly be misunderstood, she flatly refused to believe him.

Meantime, in Cincinnati, the inevitable happened. Alethea Foley, hearing that Hearn had left a "vast fortune" in Japan, announced her intention—either on her own volition or, as is more probable, at the persuasion of some interested person—of instituting suit to "protect her rights." On July 14, 1906, under the heading, "Claim Made by a Negress," the Cincinnati *Enquirer* devoted a column and a half to the story:

"The literary world at large will no doubt be astounded when the results of a quiet investigation which is being made by a colored woman known as Alethea Foley, but whose rightful name, if she proves her claims, is Mrs. Lafcadio P. Hearn, are made known.

The woman claims that she was the wedded wife and is now the widow of Lafcadio Hearn, the author, poet and journalist, and stated last evening that there was a separation in the autumn

"of 1877, three years after their marriage, but that neither she nor Hearn ever secured a divorce.

The purpose of the investigation is to show that Alethea Foley is entitled as his widow to a share in any estate left by Hearn when he passed away in Tokyo of heart trouble on the morning of September 26, 1904. Alethea Foley is backed in the matter by a relative named William L. Anderson, an educated colored man, who is the owner of a printing concern in Eighth street, a few doors east of Plum street.

The woman was seen at her home last evening, at 656 Kenyon avenue, and told the story of Hearn's life in this city as she knew it. Alethea Foley is at present 53 years of age. She was born near Maysville, Ky., a slave, and was the property of a family named Tabb. One of the young women of the family married a man named Salee, and Alethea was given to her as a wedding present. After the Civil War she worked for various families in the neighborhood of Maysville, Ky., and early in the seventies came to this city. She

"then secured a place as cook in a boarding house at the northeast corner of McFarland and Plum streets. One evening in the summer of 1871, a printer named John Bean, who boarded at the place, brought home with him a young man whom he introduced as Hearn. The latter was destitute and had no clothes fit to wear. Bean went good for his board until he secured a situation, and soon the young fellow became known about the house as Pat Hearn.

Alethea Foley states that he gave his name as Lafcadio P. Hearn, but that the boarders had trouble in pronouncing his first name, and one day he told them to try his middle name, "Patrick," and see if that pleased them. Hearn, she says, became secretary for Librarian Vickers, earning barely enough to pay his board, and after that became a proofreader for a printing firm in this city.

He was shy and diffident, and his eyesight was bad, owing, he stated, to an accident that had happened in his youth. Hearn rarely joined in

"general conversation with the boarders and always, if possible, found his way to the kitchen and spent hours talking to Alethea of the misery of her youth in slavery. He, too, he often stated, had seen and felt misery.

He was the son, he told her, of an Irish gentleman and a Greek woman. His mother became infatuated with an English attorney who called at the house one day during his father's absence. She mounted behind him on his horse, and the attorney, emulating Lochinvar of old, rode away with Lafcadio's mother, whom he never saw again. He had a half brother who lived in New York, and a sister, Kate Hearn, who also came to this country.

After some years Hearn, Alethea Foley states, gained fame in the local newspaper field through the writing of the horrible tanyard murder and other stories. One day he came to her and proposed marriage, and she states that she pointed out to him that it might mean social ostracism for him. He finally persuaded her, she states, and

"left to secure the license, asking G. Mortimer Roe, formerly well known in the newspaper field here, to accompany him. Roe refused, after finding out that the bride-to-be was a colored woman, stating that he would have nothing to do with the affair.

However, Alethea Foley relates, the license was secured and they were wedded on the evening of June 14, 1874, at the residence of Mrs. Lottie Cleneay, a colored woman, on the north side of Longworth street, two doors east of Plum street. The ceremony was performed by an Episcopal colored minister, Rev. John King. Another colored divine, named Webb, had been asked to perform the service, but refused, claiming he might get into trouble for marrying a white man and a colored woman. Mrs. Lottie Cleneay witnessed the marriage, and is still living, as is Mrs. Mary Field, another colored witness.

Alethea Foley relates that after the marriage she and Hearn went housekeeping at 114 Longworth street, next door to the old Adams express

"stables. They lived there for a long time and then moved to the southeast corner of Chestnut and John streets, where they resided until she left her husband, in the autumn of 1877 and went with her young relative, William Anderson, to live at Indianapolis. After nine months' stay in that city they returned here and found that Hearn had left the city.

She has never heard from him directly but once since, and states that she received no marriage certificate and that all records of the issuance of the license and marriage were burned at the time of the courthouse riots in this city.

She states, however, that articles were published about that time in some of the papers reviling Hearn for wedding a negress and that many of the journalist's friends were well acquainted with the fact that they were legally wedded.

Alethea Foley said last night that but for the fact that she had voluntarily left Hearn she might have lived with him until the time of his death. She states that she wearied of his peculiarities.

"Hers was not the morose, silent disposition that was his. Nothing ever suited him, she says.

His linen was never ironed properly, no matter how much pains she took with it, and he was never satisfied with his meals. Hearn, she states, would give her orders as to what he wanted for dinner when he left the house in the morning. When he came home at noon he would tell her to throw away what she had cooked and go to an Italian friend of his, nearly a mile distant, procure other food and bring it to him.

She states that she next heard of Hearn in New Orleans. Henry Watkin, an old-time printer, at present in the Old Men's Home on Walnut Hills, a friend of Hearn, came to her with a letter. Her husband, as she terms Hearn, was ill in a hospital at New Orleans and had sent out all his clothes and pawned them. He had break-bone fever. The woman secured his address and sent him her all, a $5 bill. She did not receive an answer to this letter. Later he wrote her one of his dreamy letters from Cuba, and again she heard he was in Martinique.

" In 1880 she received word that Hearn had died in Baton Rouge, La., and sent on and received what she thought was a complete verification of his death. A year later she wedded a colored man named John Kleintank, but shortly after, receiving word that Hearn was still alive, she and her second husband separated and have not lived together since.

Alethea Foley says that some days ago a publishing house sent word to her that a life of Lafcadio Hearn was to be published, and, ascertaining that she had married the author in 1874, they asked permission to use her name. Anderson, her relative, states that Appletons, Mills, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Harper Brothers and other large publishers produce Hearn's works, and attorneys in the East are investigating to ascertain if there is not a revenue that can be turned over to the colored woman. For a long time she sought news of Hearn's whereabouts, and finally found out through the Appletons that he was in Japan. She states that in the work to be published will ap-

"pear a number of letters written by Hearn to his friend Henry Watkin, the aged printer, in which he refers to her in terms of affection and sentiment, and asks to be remembered to her.

A letter has been received by her from a daughter of the minister who wedded them, now dead, in which it is stated by the daughter that she often heard her father talk of the wedding of Alethea Foley and Lafcadio Hearn.

Anderson states he was a member of the Hearn household when a small boy, and says that he received his training and tutelage under Hearn. He remembers him as a small man, with protruding eyes and a limp mustache, whose brain seemed on fire with ideas that must be expressed through his pen. He did not care to talk. Anderson has made the history of Lafcadio Hearn a study. He says that the author came to this city when about 19 years of age. He was married to Alethea Foley when 23 years old. After Hearn commenced to make money he developed the prodigality of a spendthrift, and would pay the last cent out of

"his pocket for anything that struck his fancy.

Anderson claims that, as he was already married, the marriage of Hearn in Japan was not a legal one, and that the matter will be taken into Court. Hearn, he says, arrived in this city when a youth without a cent, left here in the same financial condition, and is supposed to have arrived in Japan broke. He is said, however, to have accumulated money there, and Alethea Foley's relatives and friends contend that she is entitled to some of the estate. She has never used the name of Hearn since they separated in the fall of 1877, and although she is known to neighbors as Mrs. John Kleintank, the name of the man whom she wedded after she received the report of Hearn's death, and from whom she separated, she still clings to the name of her youth, Alethea Foley. Though now 53 years of age, she still shows traces of her former beauty, and but for a slight crispness of her hair would readily be mistaken for a white woman."

Journalism being what it was in 1906, the story

Santa Clara County Free Library

did not escape the attention of other newspapers throughout the country. Here and there the space given it in the news columns was supplemented by editorial comment. Among others, this editorial appeared in the New York *Sun:*

"It will surprise no one who knew Lafcadio Hearn at all well to hear that a negro woman in Cincinnati now claims recognition as his widow and seeks to obtain, as such, a share of the American royalties on his remarkable literary work. Hearn spent several years in the Ohio city, and it is sufficiently notorious that in his purely private and domestic relations he consorted with colored people only. Notwithstanding his extraordinary literary attainments, his profound and varied scholarship, and his brilliant and poetic intellectual equipment, Lafcadio Hearn admitted no member of his own race to genuine intimacy. Among his fellow workers—he was then engaged in journalism—he was regarded with good will, though never with understanding or affection. Of his real and inner life none had the mer-

"est inkling. In Cincinnati, as in New Orleans subsequently, he was a mystery. He had no social life of which any white person was even remotely aware.

In New Orleans, a truly cosmopolitan city and always in close touch with Paris, it soon became known that Hearn, whatever motives may have actuated him in Cincinnati, had a perfectly definite and more or less intelligible purpose so far as concerned his chosen associations there. He had attracted the attention of the French writers of his day by translations of "Loti," Maupassant, Gautier and others. His felicitous reproduction of the essence and the aroma of the original persuaded the litterateurs of Paris that a miracle had been vouchsafed to man. When finally he published, not the translation, but the English equivalent of Theophile Gautier's *Une Nuit de Cleopatre*, the attitude of the French group was transformed from complacent indulgence to honest and enthusiastic wonder. The whole literary and intellectual world realized the presence of a special and peculiar luminary.

" All this time, however, Hearn was living in the downtown river front quarter of New Orleans with negroes—not the ordinary 'cornfield' type, but the Congo priestesses and prophetesses; as a matter of fact with no less a personage than Marie Lavaux, the 'Voudoo Queen.' He was studying the Congo superstitions, folklore, songs, music and incantations. It was his passion, the same passion that later took him to the West Indies, to Martinique, to Hayti, Barbados, always in a fruitless quest. For he found that the so-called 'African music' previously elaborated by Gottschalk, as in the *Bamboula* and other compositions, was a mere barbaric adaptation of Spanish melodies, translated by the slaves from Santo Domingo, while the nursery croonings of the old bandanna'd blacks in New Orleans—*Le Crocodile, Deux Canards*, &c.—were mutilated French songs brought from Hayti to Louisiana by the refugees.

From the West Indies Hearn went to Japan, where he formed some sort of domestic relation

"with a native; and he died there in 1904 while occupying an important professorship in the Imperial College at Tokyo. He was the son of a British Navy officer and a Greek girl, a native of one of the islands in the Aegean Archipelago. His appearance was forbidding, if not actually repulsive. Only about five feet tall, with one eye totally blind and the other so disabled that he had to hold papers within an inch in order to decipher them; always ill-dressed, unkempt, slovenly; with the face of a weasel and the manners of an oaf; he was nevertheless one of the most brilliant and picturesque writers of his day, a profound, versatile and poetic thinker, one of the greatest masters of occult languages and literature the Christian world has ever known.

That Hearn lived with the Cincinnati negress in an intimate domestic relation is easily imaginable. That he actually went through the form of a legal marriage his acquaintances will believe with difficulty. If throughout his career in the United States he ever paid tribute to any conven-

"tion whatever, the men who came nearest to knowing him have never heard of it."

With material of this kind in public circulation all over the country, all thought of keeping any phase of the Foley episode secret had, of course, to be abandoned. The most that Hearn's friends could do was to try to minimize its importance, and to this task they at once set themselves. From Dayton, Tunison wrote a vigorous attack on the mis-statements in the *Sun* editorial, and a similar defense appeared in Hearn's old paper, the New Orleans *Times-Democrat*. Tunison also persuaded Krehbiel to print a counter-blast in the *Tribune*. That this was not accomplished without some persuasion is indicated by the following excerpt from a letter written by Tunison in September, 1906:

"I hope you saw . . . Krehbiel's article in the *Tribune*. I had some work to bring him up to the point and I don't believe I could have accomplished it if I had not made an appeal to his vanity as well as to the facts. But when he did come out he was very interesting. He not only confirmed

"every word I said, but he added some very curious matter from Hearn's own autograph matter which, I suppose, will appear in the Bisland book. And he slapped the New York *Sun* just as I had done. I imagine that gang will wait for facts hereafter."

When the Foley scandal became public, a Cincinnati acquaintance sent Miss Bisland a clipping from a local newspaper. On July 20, he received the following reply, in which she attributed the exposé to Bronner:

"The clipping you enclosed had been forwarded to me by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. The writer of it was beyond doubt this man Bronner who tried to force Mrs. Hearn to permit him to publish the letters and, when he failed, raked the slums, apparently, to find details for this disgusting story, which he has been holding as a threat to blackmail Mrs. Hearn's representative, Paymaster McDonald. He has, I have reason to think, been backed up in this by Brentano's, who like to use unmentionable methods of advertising. They

"stole *One of Cleopatra's Nights* a few years ago by legal trickery, after Worthington had plundered Lafcadio through it. He got no renumeration from either publisher. And now Mr. Watkin—of whom he was very fond—lends himself to this hideous scandal in order that he may get money out of the letters written him in confidence and affection by a friend who has passed into the sacred helplessness of death! And yet people blame Lafcadio for being suspicious. He was a dear, imaginative, fantastic child, a child of genius, and was always the prey of the vile in consequence... Of course, I already knew the story, and equally, of course, he never was married to the woman, but the connection had its origin in a fantastic sense of duty, and the stain and horror of it pursued him all his life. It was one of the causes of his shyness and secretiveness."

Meantime, in Cincinnati, the Foley matter was progressing. On July 24, the negress presented her formal claim, and a scrambled account appeared in a local paper, in which Hearn was referred to as

"a wealthy Californian." Mitchell McDonald, Hearn's literary executor, and his publishers, sent a legal representative to Cincinnati to contest the Foley claims, and on August 3, the *Enquirer* printed the following:

"Judge M. F. Wilson, representing an Eastern publishing house that is interested in the claim of Alethea Foley, a negress, that she was married to the late Lafcadio Hearn and not divorced from him, yesterday laid before Judge Malsbary, of the Probate Court, information as to the law at the time of the alleged marrriage, which will have an important bearing on the assertions of the woman that she is entitled to a share of the estate left by Hearn.

The woman asserts that she was married to Hearn in 1874 in this city and that after about a year he left and never lived with her again. In later years she heard that he was dead and married again, but still later learned that he was alive and did not live with her second husband after that. She declared her intention of asserting her

"claim to the estate as the widow of Hearn. In pursuance of that purpose she had an application filed to restore the record of her marriage, as it was destroyed in the court-house fire of 1884.

The concerns that published the writings of Mr. Hearn were naturally much interested because they were likely, as they saw it, to have to pay a portion of the royalties from the sale of his books to this woman when they had supposed they would go to the widow and children of Mr. Hearn, whom he left in Japan when he died.

Judge Wilson cited to Judge Malsbary the law of Ohio relating to marriage at the time the new claimant as a widow claims to have been married to Mr. Hearn. It shows that in January, 1861, there was enacted by the Legislature a statute which prohibited the marriage of whites and blacks, prohibited the issuance of a license to them and prohibited any person authorized to perform the marriage ceremony from doing so for such persons. The penalty was a fine or imprisonment or both. Judge Wilson asserts that if

"Hearn actually married the woman he must have failed to tell the Probate official who issued the license that she was a negress and thus committed a fraud upon the Court. The questions therefore arise: Was not the marriage of Hearn and the woman void because of the fraud, and can Judge Malsbary restore a record that was the result of fraud? Also, when Judge Malsbary sees the woman and will know that she is a negress, and, knowing the law to have prohibited her marriage to a white man, can he restore the record of such a marriage? Judge Wilson thinks he cannot, and that, therefore, the woman's claim will fail and the marriage be declared void. The law remained on the statute books until July 1, 1877, and the woman claims to have been married in 1874."

A few days later, the motion of the negress was denied and the prospect of a legal battle for Hearn's "fortune" dissolved. Temporarily, all was quiet on the Cincinnati front.

Now that the story was out, most of Hearn's

friends were rather relieved than otherwise, for it put at an end the possibility that it would be capitalized to help the sale of a rival biography. The exposé, however, had the effect of putting Hearn's official biographer in a highly uncomfortable position. Here was evidence that hardly admitted of two interpretations; she was, of course, presently forced to abandon her contention that Hearn had not been married to the young negress. The facts were now common property; to ignore them entirely in Hearn's official biography was out of the question. Resigned at last to the distasteful task of making some reference to the episode, she nevertheless confined her mention of it to a few oblique sentences that were so vague as to convey nothing whatever to any reader unacquainted with the facts. When Krehbiel and Tunison learned that this was her intention they opposed it so vigorously that she was confirmed in her growing belief that she was Hearn's sole champion and that the world was in league against her to blacken the memory of a much misunderstood and essentially blameless character.

It must be admitted that in many ways her attitude was a natural one. Except in the case of Miss Bisland, one looks in vain for any real understanding of Hearn's complex character, for any tolerance or breadth of vision, on the part of those who were then so industriously engaged in judging him. The attitude of his Japanese friends, when these presently made themselves heard, formed a refreshing contrast. In 1905 and 1906, however, Miss Bisland's lot was an unenviable one. With Tunison and Krehbiel trying to dissuade her from publishing an emasculated biography and grimly supplying her with unwanted evidence of his frailties, with Milton Bronner hurling charges of trickery and denying her the use of the Watkin letters, and with Gould, the Philadelphia doctor whom Hearn had placed at the head of his distinguished list of enemies, grimly writing yet another "estimate" of Hearn, one is hardly surprised that she sometimes looked on herself as Lafcadio's only champion. Because she was contributing so much—her own collection of Hearn letters, and

her labor in writing the biography—she was indignant at the lack of equal generosity on the part of others. Any evidence that she was receiving less than complete co-operation was sufficient to call forth her sharp criticism. Bronner, Watkin, Tunison, Dr. Gould, all in turn felt her disapproval. Mrs. Atkinson, Hearn's half-sister, who lived in England, did not escape censure for her refusal to allow Hearn's letters to her to appear in the official biography. Selections from these Atkinson letters were not published until five years later, when they appeared in *Lafcadio Hearn: His Life and Work*, by Nina H. Kennard.

The Cincinnati scandal burned brightly for a few weeks, then died down. There was, however, one final flare-up. In October, Tunison wrote his friend Hill:

"Did you notice the paragraph in the *Enquirer*, quoted from the Japanese correspondence of some Kansas City paper, to the effect that Hearn's widow was coming to Cincinnati to look after an estate he left there? Of course, it is none of

"my business; but think of the heartache the poor little woman will have if she carries out a scheme of that sort. Manifestly some slime hired by a yellow newspaper has worked this thing for the possible sensation there is in it. If Hearn left property in Cincinnati, the Japanese woman ought to be able to get it without falling foul of Hearn's Cincinnati wife or mistress or whatever she was to him. The thing ought to be stopped merely in behalf of common humanity. If Hearn left a Cincinnati estate, there ought to be a way of getting it for his wife without her presence. I confess that the whole business looks to me like the dirtiest kind of conspiracy; and I should not be altogether inclined to clear Hearn in the matter. He was capable of tall perjury if he thought it necessary. But his Japanese wife appears to be a lady in every sense of the term, well-born, well-bred, and faithful. I think there should be a little agitation of this matter before the blackguards of the yellow press get a chance at it."

Tunison also communicated his alarm to Kreh-

this letter to Tunison indicates:

Blue Hill, Me., August 15

"My dear Tunison:

TELEGRAPH & POST OFFICE,
OYSTER BAY, L.I.

July 28. 1905

APPLEGARTH
CENTRE ISLAND.

Elizabeth Peterson

My dear Mr Hill

The clipping you enc
had been forwarded to me b
Houghton. Mifflin & Co. The
writer of it was beyond a do
this man Brouner who tri
to force Mrs Dearn to prom
him to publish the letter
& when he failed raked u
slums, apparently, to fi

tails for this disgusting story
ich he has been holding a
threat to blackmail hers
ans representative. Pay-ma
c Donald. He has, I have
ason to think, been backed
in this by the Brentano
o like to use unmentionable
ethods of advertising. They
ld "One of Cleopatra's high
few years ago by legal
ickery, after Worthington

had plundered Lafcadio Hea
n. He got no remuneration f
either publisher. And now he
watkin - whom he was rea
found ge - leads him sel
his hideous scandal in o
that he may get money o
of his letters within him
confidence & affection by
friend who has passed in
the sacred helplessness o
death! And yet people
blame Lafcadio for bei

spicious — He was a dear
agination, fantastic child - a
ild with genius, & was always
prey of the vile in consequenc
e revelations of cupidity, jealou
coarseness I have had during
preparation of this work, from som
om he loved & trusted, are too
azing. Of course I already knew
story, & equally of course he never
married to the woman, but the
nection had its origin in a fantas
e of duty, & the stain & horror of
ened him all his life. It was one
causes of his shyness & secretiveness
ve you so much for "Gigamps". I
dine that & your papers tele

"of your suggestion about the publication in Japan, I fancy. On one of the others, when she returned them, I found a note as follows:

'To show how absurd these scandals are—Page Baker, who knew him better than anyone in New Orleans, sent him to write an article about Marie Lavaux and says that that was the only time L. H. ever saw her. A man I once knew from Martinique told me that L. H. boarded in a house kept by an old negro woman who had a daughter and grandchildren living with her. Such a thing is perfectly common in the West Indies; no white person objects to boarding in such a place. When he was ill and could get Harper to advance him nothing—they only pay royalties a year after they are due—[here Mrs. W. is mistaken; six months is the time. K.] the woman kept him there without charge till he got money. That's the story of the scandal. Of course, Mrs. Hearn never thought of coming to Cincinnati. Tunison is a kind creature, but, like all newspapermen, believes every newspaper scandal.'

" The final remark will amuse you. I told Mrs. Wetmore that what you and I knew about Hearn we knew, there was no guess work about it. I knew her well enough to dare, as I did, tell her, to illustrate a Hearn characteristic, the story of how he and Jerry had gone to a whorehouse, and agreed to be downstairs at a certain time, but H. not showing up, J. got impatient and went to his room where he found Hearn with his girl, she naked in the middle of the floor, he walking around and around her, his one eye six inches from her, admiring her fine lines. Mrs. W. only laughed and said that was reasonable,—it went to prove that Hearn's interest in negro women was purely aesthetic. The little beast! (H. not Mrs. W.!)

I had been thinking about writing along the lines of your article but did not want to mention myself. You are in all things absolutely right. Hearn could not tell one tune from another. He sent me some music but always with a note of protest to the effect that either I had it already or that possibly it did not signify. Good luck to you in your new venture."

Tunison forwarded Krehbiel's letter to Alexander Hill, together with this note:

"I enclose a letter from H. E. Krehbiel which I fancy will amuse you. At least it will show that the discussion of Hearn is getting down to the buff. . . . I don't know what Mrs. W. means by calling me 'a kind creature,' but I presume she thought of 'good fellow' and then decided it would be too familiar, inasmuch as she never saw me. In my reply I told Krehbiel the rest of the story which he tells in this letter, and added one from Hearn's Martinique experience which I thought an effective answer to Mrs. W.'s defense. But it is so outrageous that I doubt if he ventures to let her see it. . . ."

The official biography was published in October, 1907. Even Krehbiel's drastic measures had proved fruitless, and from end to end the tone of the book was laudatory. No reader, otherwise uninformed, could gain from it a picture other than that of a completely spotless character, a veritable paragon of virtue. Bronner's book, too, had been

purified by the fires of contention that had attended its writing, for it contained no disparaging passages; even Hearn's references to Alethea Foley had been deleted from the Watkin letters.

Two books had appeared, and the figure of the turbulent, rebellious little Irishman stood before the world almost unrecognizable beneath thick coats of whitewash. But in Philadelphia a third book was nearing completion. Gould, the literary doctor, brooded over the abuse that had been heaped upon him by his enemy. He had formed his own opinion, and Elizabeth Bisland's theory that Hearn was misunderstood failed to interest him.

IV

MEANWHILE *his gluttony for rare books on recondite matters kept him constantly poor; but proved a far better investment, as tools of trade, than his other and more speculative expenditures. Eventually he gathered a library of considerable value, enriched by his own notes, and many scrapbooks, but of even these he was deprived later, through his inability to cope with those more skilled than himself in worldly matters, and was never after able to recover it.*

HE quotation is from page 70, volume I, of the first edition of the Bisland biography. Later editions omit the latter part of the paragraph and readers are left to assume what they like as to the disposition of Hearn's library. This is to be regretted, for the matter is both important and interesting.

Hearn thought highly enough of his books to make very frequent references to them in his letters, and for a reason that is easily understood. Until

very late in his life, this library was the only property of any value that he had accumulated. His letters from New Orleans are sprinkled with references to it: with little boasts as to its increasing size and value, with accounts of his searches through local bookstores, of his discoveries in catalogues, and of his dealings with booksellers in Paris, London, and half a dozen other cities. He even planned, in 1882, to open "a little French bookstore," and his letters to Krehbiel make constant reference to curious and bizarre titles. Much of the material he collected was put to practical use in the series of translations he did for the *Times-Democrat*, selections from which later formed the subject-matter of his first book, *Stray Leaves from Strange Literatures*. The language and legends of the Creoles presently came to fascinate him, and his collection grew in another direction "—by the way, I have quite a Creole library, embracing the Creole dialects of both hemispheres." A little later he boasts: "My library is very fine. I have a collection worth a good deal of money, which you would like to see." Again: "... I save

nothing—except queer books, imported from all parts of the world." And again: "I have assembled a library worth $2000."

This was the collection to which Miss Bisland made reference in the passage quoted above. It was not part of the meagre estate Hearn left when he died. The man who had possession of it—who, in Miss Bisland's phrase, was "more skilled than himself in worldly matters"—was Hearn's third biographer, George Milbry Gould.

The acquaintance of Hearn and Gould began in 1887, when the latter wrote in praise of one of Hearn's translations. Letters from admiring strangers were not then everyday events in the life of the New Orleans journalist, and Hearn's answer was prompt and cordial. A very active correspondence, of a rather stilted "literary" variety, was soon under way. It continued during the remaining months of Hearn's stay in New Orleans, and was resumed in May, 1888, while the latter was in Martinique. We then find Hearn alternately advising Gould on his literary projects and volunteer-

ing such personal information as his weight and the number of inches he measured around his chest. In April, 1889, just before he sailed north again, he wrote: "If you could find me in Philadelphia a very quiet room where I could write without noise for a few months, I would try my luck there." Gould responded with a warm invitation that he become his guest, and Hearn accepted. He remained at Gould's house on South 17th Street for five months, returning to New York in the fall of 1889. In March, 1890, he set off for Japan.

The three years, 1887-8-9, covered the period of their friendship. During the first two years and a half the men had never met. They parted enemies, and during the remaining fourteen years of his life Hearn's references to the Philadelphia physician were chiefly for purposes of illustrating his theory as to the mischief false friends can create. In the middle '90s, when his books on Japan were making him well known, Gould made several attempts to renew their friendship. The attempts were futile; Hearn "suspected his motives" and maintained his aloof attitude to the end.

In 1908, after his book on Hearn had been published, Gould wrote Joseph Tunison: "What a strange way Hearn had of abusing old friends! Can it be explained?"

In spite of the plaintive note of this question, Gould could hardly have been puzzled to account for Hearn's attitude toward him. He was aware of the reason for his former friend's hostility, and it was this knowledge that colored every word of his remarkable book.

Concerning Lafcadio Hearn is without question the bitterest attack on a literary man of importance ever published in America. This effect is heightened rather than diminished by the form in which its author chose to cast it; for, not caring to state his dislike frankly, Gould adopted a curious alternative. He put his book forth as an "estimate" of Hearn by one of his "closest friends," and then proceeded, always in a tone of gentle regret, to denounce his character, his morals, his literary ability, his mental capacities and training, his personal habits, his family and his friends, in terms

far less restrained than might have been expected from an avowed enemy.

It was his amazing approach to the subject rather than the charges themselves (most of which were promptly disproved) that so incensed Hearn's friends, and caused even those whose admiration had been far from strong to come to his defense.

Gould's real attitude toward Hearn, and his resentment toward his champions, Miss Bisland in particular, become evident in the first paragraph of his preface. It begins by the statement that there is no need for a biography of Hearn; that existing biographies are full of inaccuracies; that the task of writing a real life would not attract any competent person; and that no one of literary discernment is under any delusion as to his supposed greatness. In passing, he points out that a biography of a literary man is valueless without a bibliography—and, curiously enough, Gould's book has a bibliography and Miss Bisland's has none. The brief paragraph closes with the statement that

Hearn was lacking in morality, scholarship, loyalty, character and other qualities, including benevolence and religion.

This paragraph is a fair sample of the remainder of the book; much of what follows is merely elaboration of these charges. He does, however, deal at some length upon his own influence on Hearn, devoting a chapter to the processes by which he succeeded, temporarily, in giving the sceptical little Irishman "a soul." Credit for having persuaded Hearn to go to Japan is also claimed by the doctor, though all other accounts of the origin of that expedition differ from Gould's. In his consideration of Hearn's style, Gould went to the length of reprinting excerpts from his "Tanyard Murder" story, a particularly gruesome product of his early newspaper days, of which the later Hearn was heartily ashamed.

Naturally, Hearn's friends were not willing to allow Gould's charges to pass unanswered. *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn* was published on May 2, 1908. Within a few days the newspapers of New

York and other cities were printing lengthy charges and countercharges in their newscolumns. Milton Bronner, whose attitude had once been antagonistic, wrote a letter of protest which was printed on May 10 in the New York *World*, and the same issue of the paper carried the news that Hearn's friends were threatening Gould and his publisher with libel suits. The following day, the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, on which Hearn had once worked, added further details, reporting that suit for $250,000 was to be filed against Gould on behalf of Mrs. Hearn because his book had questioned her marriage to the author and, hence, the legitimacy of their children. This account relates that appeals were sent to Gould by members of the faculty of the Imperial University at Tokyo that he withdraw his charges, and tells of a visit to Philadelphia by a group of Hearn's friends to persuade him to retract. The dispatch to the *Enquirer* states that Gould's reply was "that if any pressure is brought to bear upon him he will publish a supplementary volume in which he will print what, out

of consideration for the memory of Hearn, he left out of the book in question." The correspondent pauses to wonder what more there can be to relate.

The following day, May 13, Hearn's New York friends, feeling that Gould's attitude had brought it on himself, opened war in earnest. Ellwood Hendrick, who had formed a close friendship with Hearn during the latter's final winter in New York, wrote the following long letter to the *Times,* which was printed in full the next morning:

"There has lately appeared a book, *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn,* by Dr. George M. Gould of Philadelphia, which is such a venomous attack upon his memory and was so evidently written in anger that one is led to inquire what possible motive there could have been to prompt it. A perusal of the work in the light of the facts which I shall set forth demonstrates the book to be much more accurately 'concerning Dr. Gould' than it is concerning Lafcadio.

Although the preface contains an apparently generous offer on the part of the author to send

"the proceeds of the abuse (after deducting the necessary expenses of compiling it) to Hearn's widow, and despite the frequent references to the intimacy between the two men, the fact remains that for the last fifteen years of his life Hearn would have absolutely nothing to do with Gould, would not answer his letters, would not allow communications to be made to him even by proxy, feared him, hated him, avoided him.

By way of indicating Hearn's reason for distrusting Gould, I give herewith a letter written by Hearn and now published for the first time: '. . . Oh, about patronizing authors after that Chicago man's fashion, I forgot to tell you a story. You may remember I was in Philadelphia for about five months at the house of a physician named George M. Gould. This person had begged and prayed me to pass a Summer with him before I went. He told me if I ever mentioned money to him he would think it an insult; his only desire was to aid me. Really I don't know much about Northern human nature —

"never did; I always take people seriously. Well, his wife, he told me at last, was jealous of his friends; she was not pleased to have me about. Of that I had good evidence. He gave me money—for I was dead broke, and said: "Go to New York and see what the Harpers can do to sending you to the tropics. Then come back and tell me." A glorious friend. I told him: "Alden has my books, worth $2500; I can't take them from him just now, but later on I will get you to get them from him, and give him this letter." (which I left with him.) "All right," he said, "when you want money on those books I'll be glad to let you have it. And my home is your home." Splendid fellow! I gave him a note of hand for the small sum he loaned me.

'As soon as I got to New York I found a letter from him telling me he could never see me at his house again, but that as I had done some literary work for him he could lend me a little more, ($20) At last I was forced on this Japan expedition. As soon as I left New York he sent the

"letter to Alden without waiting for news from me and got the books. From Japan I wrote him to do so, only after he had already done it without my knowledge. On application for some of them by mail *he wrote that our correspondence was over,* sending me a volume for which he charged postage. And he never even returned my notes, in lieu of which I had asked him to take the books and settle the debt—trusting to his honor. So I paid dearly for that patronage. 'Bitter,' saith the Italian proverb, 'is another man's bread.' Isn't this sort of thing enough to disgust one with Western civilization?

L. H.'

This letter was written probably in 1890 or 1891; it is not dated. I add a second, dated April 16, 1893:

'Dear Hendrick: No letter from you this mail, but I am writing to ask advice of a wiser head than my own. I told you the story of that Philadelphia doctor and how he had treated me. Now, after a silence of nearly three years, he has written

"me a loving letter, *and asks if I want my books back!* I won't answer his letter—because I can't guess the purpose of it. It might be simply to provoke such an answer from me as would give him evidence to support his possession of the books. I *should* like to get them back, for as Professor of English literature a complete collection of masterpieces such as the books represent, and such as I cannot now afford to replace, would be of immense value to me. I would be able to advance a reasonable sum to clear up the matter, but nothing over $150. The real debt was only $60, and I worked for him so as to more than cover that, *entre nous*, having assisted him to compile his medical dictionary, and having written an article to which he put his name, and which brought him $25. Then I got him in the way of a paper in the *Arena*, which gave him $85. However, here's the puzzle. Whether the letter is really a generous impulse or a fraud I don't know, and I don't know whether to answer it or not. Tell me, when you get time, what you think would be a wise course

Santa Clara County Free Library

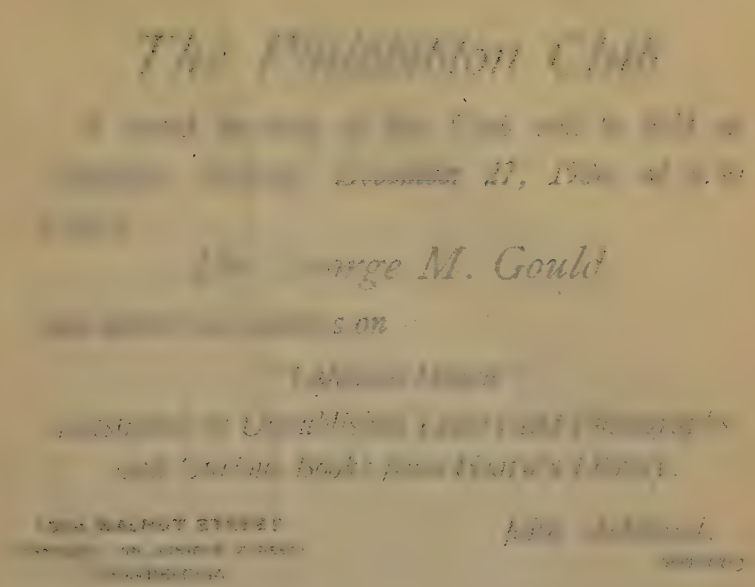
"to follow. You see, he's not only got my books, but an I.O.U. note for $60, and a fictitious I.O.U. sent him only for the purpose of helping him to get the books into his hands.'

The fictitious I.O.U. reads as follows: 'I owe George M. Gould of Philadelphia the sum of $500 for board and lodging during the summer of 1889. And in lieu of ready money I give him unconditionally my library,' &c.

He wrote Gould asking him to sell the library, keep what he owed him, and remit the balance or to keep the books and send what he could, or to do whatever he pleased, trusting to his honor. Gould did practically nothing.

On February 15, 1894, he wrote:

'....The Philadelphia doctor has sent me a second letter which I enclose to amuse you partly, and partly to get your advice about. My silence seems to bother him. Letter 3 ought to prove more interesting. I answer none because something like an instinct tells me not to. I can't attribute his motives to pure kindness, because he does nothing—



Card announcing Dr. Gould's address on Hearn before the Philobiblon Club.

get the books into his hands.'

unconditionally my library,' &c.

The Philobiblon Club

A stated meeting of the Club will be held on Thursday Evening, December 27, 1906, at 8.30 o'clock

Dr. George M. Gould

will deliver an address on

"Lafcadio Hearn"

illustrated by Unpublished Letters and Photographs and Curious Books from Hearn's Library.

1324 WALNUT STREET
(ENTRANCE ON JUNIPER STREET)
PHILADELPHIA

John Ashhurst,
Secretary

"only asks questions. He is a great coward, I know, on one subject—social opinion—the opinion of the Philadelphia "circle" he hopes some day to get into. Perhaps he is anxious on that score by anticipation. Mercy! What scandal I am talking, considering that he *might* possibly be simply feeling sorry!'

A later letter requests me not to see Gould on his behalf with a view of getting his library for him.

Now, the exact contents of Gould's letter, telling Hearn that their correspondence was over, will probably never be known. But, giving Gould credit for not meaning what Hearn construed him to say, the fact remains that up to the present time Gould has possession of his library, his notes—in fact, everything that was Lafcadio Hearn's except the clothes he wore—up to the time of his departure for Japan. On page 102, Gould naively suspects that, inasmuch as there were no books on Japan in the library, Hearn did not want them.

" As soon as Hearn was dead there appeared in *Putnam's Magazine* an article on him by his 'closest friend,' Dr. Gould, in which he says: 'Probably he never opened his heart so generously to any one as to me, nor did he so frankly allow another one to look into his past life. But it was done, of course, with the unexpressed condition that it was to a friend, and that no friend would betray the trust.'

Something must have changed his mind, and the cause of it is not obscure. Paymaster Mitchell McDonald, U.S.N., is Hearn's literary executor, and he was anxious, on behalf of the widow and children, to secure the library for them. Another reason (which Mr. McDonald explained) was to get someone to compile a volume of juvenilia from Hearn's earlier notes and sketches, all of which are included in the library in Gould's possession. He still has the library, and, although he declares that it is of no value to him, he belies his own statement by making a filling out of Hearn's unpublished writings to complete his spitebook.

Those of Hearn's friends who knew Mr. McDonald and sympathized with him in his efforts to get the library, were frankly annoyed and said so. This, in turn, augmented Gould's wrath to such an extent that he threatened to publish all sorts of scandals about Hearn if anything more was said about the library. 'They musn't blame me if their hero is badly soiled,' said he. 'It is all their doing.' (This is quoted from his own stenographer's notes of an interview with a gentleman from Boston.)

Well, scandal is a pretty nasty business, and the people threatened were all of them perfectly quiet and good. They knew the book was coming out and hoped by saying nothing about the library that, although it would probably be full of errors, (because the doctor has nothing at first hand or from people in close touch with Hearn for the last fifteen years of his life) there would be a certain understanding presumed that he would keep somewhere near the bounds of good taste. What happened I shall show by the follow-

"ing quotation from Gould's book, with a few comments by way of elucidation.

On page 4 he says that Hearn was 'deprived by nature, by the necessities of his life or by conscious intention, of religion, morality, scholarship, magnanimity, loyalty, character, benevolence, and other constituents of personal greatness.' On page 5 he says: 'Except in pursuit of literary excellence, Hearn had no character whatever.' Now, when a man dies mourned and beloved by a large part of a great nation, as Hearn did in Japan, whom thousands of men who have studied under him declare to have been a noble inspiration, statements of this sort prove themselves to be not judgment but anger.

On pages 15 and 16 he intimates in a pained way that Hearn may have been an illegitimate child. He is not certain; he just intimates it in the interests of 'truth.' Now, if Gould had not broken with Hearn he would have known that he had a half-sister who was very fond of him, who certainly did not think him illegitimate,

"and who could have given him full details of the family.

On page 18 he says Hearn could not speak French with ease or correctness. I think of that wonderful translation, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard,* and wish that we only had one such defective linguist with us to-day!

In the chapters relating to his life in Cincinnati, when he was about twenty years of age, he digs up every item that he can discover that may give distress to a sensitive reader. There are young reporters today who have a tendency to write of gruesome things. They will get over it just as Hearn got over it, but they will be more fortunate than he if they have no false friend sniffing around after their tracks to get material for 'a study of their literary development.'

On page 54 we find this entirely original description of New Orleans:

'Perhaps the single city in the world which would satisfy his dream more nearly than could any other was New Orleans. Being psychologi-

"cally for the most part of degenerate Latin stock, and especially of the French variety, with the requisite admixture of exotic and tropic barbarism; bathed, but not cooked, in the hot and brilliant sunshine he loved and hated; touched and energized by too little Teutonic blood and influence, New Orleans offered to the unhappy man the best possible surroundings for the growth of his talents.'

On page 100 Gould says he compelled Hearn to go to Japan. I was with him two or three times a week during the Winter of 1889-90 until he started, and he never seemed to think Gould made him go; never mentioned Gould as a determining factor.

I understand that he went because of representations made by an employe of the publishing house of Harper & Brothers without authority, and of which the firm had no knowledge whatever. Now, he had no sort of a business head, and when he found things were not as he expected he held everybody connected with the establishment to blame.

" On page 103 we find that he could not teach English literature (this despite scores and scores of his students who declare him to have been an inspired teacher), and on page 105 the loving friend finds that he chose beautiful themes for his writing because it was more profitable than the choice of repulsive themes and methods.

Gould cannot forgive Hearn for being without what he calls religion. Of course, there are those of us who, reading his works, find a marvellous insight into the soul and the worship and the ideals of the Japanese; and the Japanese themselves say so. The fact is, Hearn was absolutely and totally without hypocrisy, and this is what Gould cannot understand, and it angers him.

On page 117 Gould's abuse became amazing: 'Hearn's views and practices as regards love and the feminine are not of sympathetic interest to those who think that monogamy is good and advisable.' Now, concerning a man who was married in 1892, and died thirteen years later,

"leaving a sacred heritage of great love and constancy and faithfulness to his wife and children, this seems to me to be pretty low down. But Gould is an expert at this. After misquoting and twisting into totally unintended meanings one of his letters in the *Life and Letters*, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., he proceeds in this wise: 'When contemplating legal marriage with "his wife" in 1892 he calculated shrewdly the advantages of the plan. He arrived in Japan in 1890, and in less than two years "my little wife and I saved nearly 2,000 Japanese dollars between us."'

Now if that does not seem to convey the idea that Mrs. Hearn was his mistress for a matter of about two years then I can't read. And aside from the question of taste in printing such sewage it is Gould's misfortune that it is untrue.

He then proceeds to berate Hearn for admitting that he is 'not respectable,' (and by a delightful coincidence he quotes from a letter in which Hearn declared he was not respectable compared to Gould), and is shocked beyond

Letter of Dr. Gould to Alexander Hill concerning the Watkin letters.

DR. GEORGE M. GOULD
~~1732 WALNUT STREET~~
~~PHILADELPHIA~~

Ithaca, N.Y.,
June 20, 19

My dear Hill:—

Undoubtedly Mr. Watkin
would place an absurd valuation upon
the letters.

Won't you get him to make an
offer to you, and ask him to put
the price at the lowest notch.
As the letters have been published
they can have little value except
to collectors, and I doubt if there
are many who are collecting.

Thank you indeed for all your
kindness to me.

Faithfully Yours

Geo. M. Gould

"measure because Hearn adored Herbert Spencer and hated Virchow.

And so on. On page 130 he refers to Mrs. Hearn and the four children as the 'butterfly lives' dependent upon him, and on page 131 we have another of Gould's fragrant blossoms of skunk cabbage: 'His vision had become almost useless' he says, '. . . the furies of his atheism, pessimism, and lovelessness were close on his track . . . nothing was left, nothing except one thing, which, chosen or not, came at the age of 54.'

It does seem as though he very possibly committed suicide, doesn't it? Well, he didn't, that's all. In a beautiful article by Ferris Greenslet in the *Atlantic Monthly* for February, 1907, the tender story of the last days of this same man, as told by his noble and devoted wife, may be found.

Elwood Hendrick"

By this time the quarrel was attracting lively public interest. Thousands of newspaper readers, the great majority of whom had no interest in

Hearn or in any of the principals in the controversy, were reading the successive letters with the avid interest that always attends a public airing of private grievances. Gould's reply to the *Times* letter was not long delayed. It appeared two days later, occupying nearly three columns of small type. His answer was mainly occupied with an account of his wrongs at the hands of Hearn's official biographer, with quotations from others who had written bitterly of Hearn, and with a letter from a friend of Gould which stated that Hearn had been a "great trial" to his host and hostess during the summer at Philadelphia. One passage refers to the "kindness and affection" in which Hearn's memory was held by both Gould and his wife, and the letter ends on this plaintive note: "It is becoming painfully evident that Mr. Hendrick is doing his friend no good by his injudicious action." As to the main points at issue: the accuracy of Gould's references to Hearn's legitimacy, to his marriage to Setsu Koizumi, and to his "suicide," the doctor was silent.

As to the library, the central point of this whole remarkable controversy, Dr. Gould reversed his former stand and dismissed the matter as unimportant. The books, he assured the public, were without interest or value. He stated that he had once had them valued by "an expert antiquarian bookdealer," who had offered him but $85 for the lot; that he had not wanted them in the first place, and that he would gladly part with them "if the false charges against me are retracted."

Gould's view that the Hearn library was without value was of recent origin when he wrote the letter, for he drew upon it, and upon Hearn's scrap-books, lavishly in the preparation of his book. References to Hearn's personal files are frequent, and such lines as: "I find the following verses in his scrap-book. . . .," " . . . made up from two scrap-books left me..." and "Manuscript copy in the possession of Dr. Gould," appear again and again. On December 18, 1906, fifteen months before his book was published, Gould wrote a Cincinnati acquaintance: "I have his library and am

to show it next week to the Philobiblon Society of Philadelphia."

A month after he had publicly announced how little value he placed on Hearn material we find him making cautious inquiries regarding the possibility of purchasing the Watkin letters. On June 20, 1908, he wrote a Cincinnati book dealer:

"Undoubtedly Mr. Watkin would place an absurd valuation upon the letters.

Won't you get him to make an offer to you, and ask him to put the price at the lowest notch? As the letters have been published they can have little value except to collectors, and I doubt if there are many who are collecting. . ."

Public interest stirred up by the controversy stimulated the sale of his book, and Gould was active getting as many reviews as possible. In a letter asking for "your *best* review and paper," he adds: "The stock has run out, the demand has been so great." In a letter a month later he lists the reviews he had received, stating: "I am glad that the book pleases. . ." However, there was another

side to the picture. "Mr. McDonald, Miss Bisland, and Mr. Hendrick," he wrote Tunison, "are furiously mad at me and threaten me by direct letters, and by Attorney's Notice, that suit is to be instituted." In preparation for this, he was particularly anxious to have Tunison's version of the library affair. The latter, however, was in no mood to aid the cause of the doctor. His unfriendly attitude included both Gould and Hearn, as this letter shows: "Dear Mr. Hill:

> The facts of the library business are damning, if they are not explained, and I shall not write to Gould until they are. Hearn mortgaged his library to a Philadelphia man and then he pawned it for $500 to H. M. Alden of *Harpers Monthly*. The Harper company had nothing to do with the case. Alden put up the money himself and finally he had to pay the freightage on the books from his home in New Jersey to Philadelphia. Hearn would have been put in the penitentiary for this exploit if he had remained in the United States, and if the other man was privy to

"the game he ought to be in prison now. There are any number of offenses I condone because they are not mentioned in the Decalogue. But I am after a thief every time, and a man has to clear himself in a case of that sort before I will have anything to do with him. . . ."

Krehbiel's stand with reference to Gould was hardly more encouraging than that of Tunsion, and this notwithstanding the fact that the doctor had dealt with him in most complimentary terms in his book. He wrote of "the inimitable perfection and preciousness" of Hearn's letters to Krehbiel. "They are well worth all his other set productions, published or burned, of the same years. Many are singly worth all the rest of our letters." In another passage he remarks on "the superlative merit of Mr. Krehbiel to have given the primary and stimulating voice to the always listening dreamer."

Such fulsome praise had little effect on the sober and rational Krehbiel. Two weeks after Gould's book was published, he wrote Tunison:

"Dear Tunison:

Thank you for letting me read your article on Gould's book. It seems to me that the doctor's purpose in beslobbering us with compliments is very transparent. There are three men whose good will he is willing to bid for—you, Alden, and me. With the later friends of the Japan coterie he is already at sword's point — hence the treatment of their letters as distinguished from mine. They are making things lively for him as you know. One of the editorial writers for *Collier's* was up to see me Thursday night to submit an article he had written (a brief note) and through him I saw the book and also Hendrick's furious onslaught on Gould in the *Times* of that day. If you have not seen it I'll get you a copy; but you must write me at once as I go to Maine in ten days. I told the Collier man that there was much that was true in Gould's moral indictment of Hearn, but also much that was false and more that needed not to have been printed at all.

" When I was in Cincinnati at the festival Hill told me that Gould had been there and called on Watkin, Farney, Henderson and Wilson. He did not mention you, so I fancy he has done in your case what he so carefully did in mine—avoided a meeting. This helps me to believe that he is more or less a scoundrel. What business has he to refer to the difference between Hearn and myself in the manner he does when he knew all along how to get at me for a statement? Why should he have written to you on the subject when he knew my address? Why did he not take your advice in the matter? See how he seeks to salivate Mr. Alden, from whom, as Hill told me, he got permission to ask a copy of the letter to you on the subject of the library. Talk about my 'noble' friendship with Hearn and the superior excellence of the letters to me (which is no new discovery but was commented on here and in London, and the reasons for which are obvious enough) does not go down under the circumstances. I am glad you made the point you did as

" to Hearn's myopia. If I ever write anything about Gould's book I'll go farther still. Hearn used to boast of the keenness of his one eye. Truthfully or falsely he claimed for it a greater capacity than that possessed by my normal pair. 'I see in the distance like a hawk,' was a phrase he used one day when I took him up the Hudson to Newburgh. It was a memorable day because he went up the river in great good humor with nature all bright and I got him back in a quarrelsome mood because a terribly black thunderstorm came up on the return and he sort of held me responsible for the change in his spirits caused by the gloom. I suppose as usual I gave him one of the paternal lectures which were necessary to keep his conduct endurable.

I fancy we shall both be pestered now more than ever to write what we know of his character. I do not intend to do anything of the sort. Beside the malice back of Gould's book there is obviously a purpose to sell his work by the aid of a stinking advertisement,—the very kind that

"Hendrick and the rest are creating for him. I shall not help. I saw Bronner's book for the first time when in Cincinnati and bought a copy. From what Hill told me I had expected many more letters and much more interesting ones. Bronner thinks the whole joke of the St. Peter steeple episode lay in the fact that a short-sighted, next to blind man was sent on high to describe what he saw. My recollection is that Hearn went up so as to get material for a description of his feelings. The most significant of these, as I remember his account to me, was the Mephistophelian delight he felt when he 'piddled on the universe.' Charley Johnson was in Cincinnati on a visit from his home in Berlin when I was there, and reminded me that he had once caught Hearn in the act, or on the verge of jumping into the canal,—possibly one of his frequent theatrical exhibitions. I can't honestly say that I ever saw Hearn really miserable or profoundly unhappy. Did you? Yet he often talked about suicide, as you know. He would have liked to kill himself spectacu-

"larly if he could have written the story for his newspaper. . .

Sincerely as of yore,
H. E. Krehbiel

P.S. Isn't it your description of the incident which set Hearn to longing for New Orleans which Gould attributes to Henderson? Who was the narrator? (page 50 of Gould's book.)"

The furor caused by the publication of *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn* presently burned itself out. The damage suit failed to materialize, and Dr. Gould's second book, which was to carry his attack still further, was never written.

The four years of bitter strife that followed his death have now been forgotten; Hearn's books and his persisting, world-wide reputation alone remain. He has been dead now more than a quarter of a century. One imagines his shade hovering above the peaceful Buddhist cemetery in distant Japan and saluting his biographers with a fleeting, ironical smile.

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